

# Choosing Representation: Institutions and Powers for Decentralized Natural Resource Management

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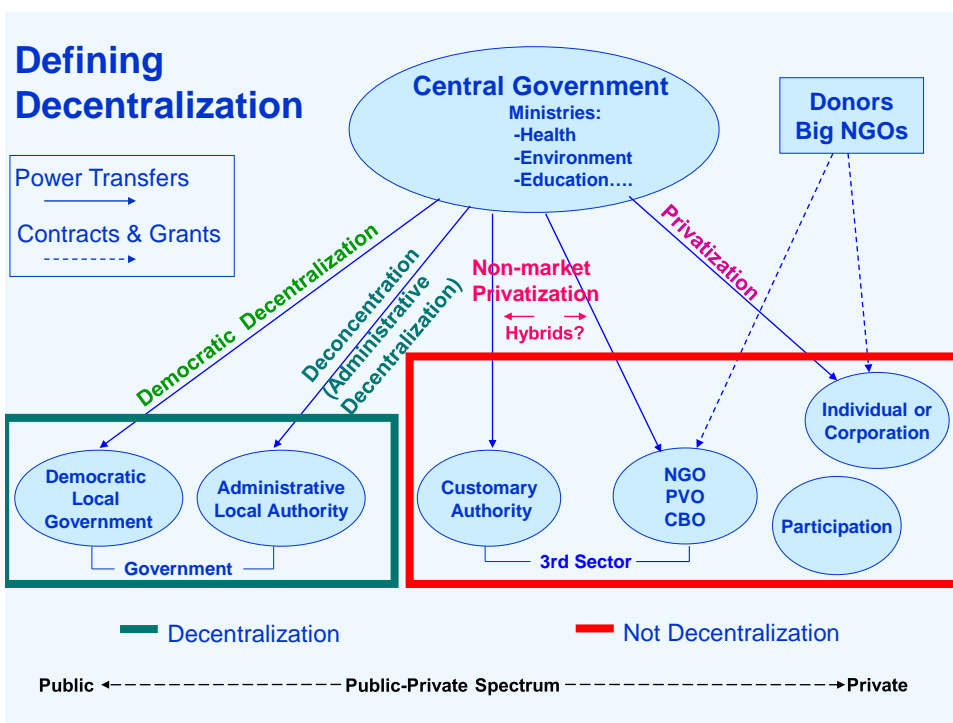
## Today's Talk

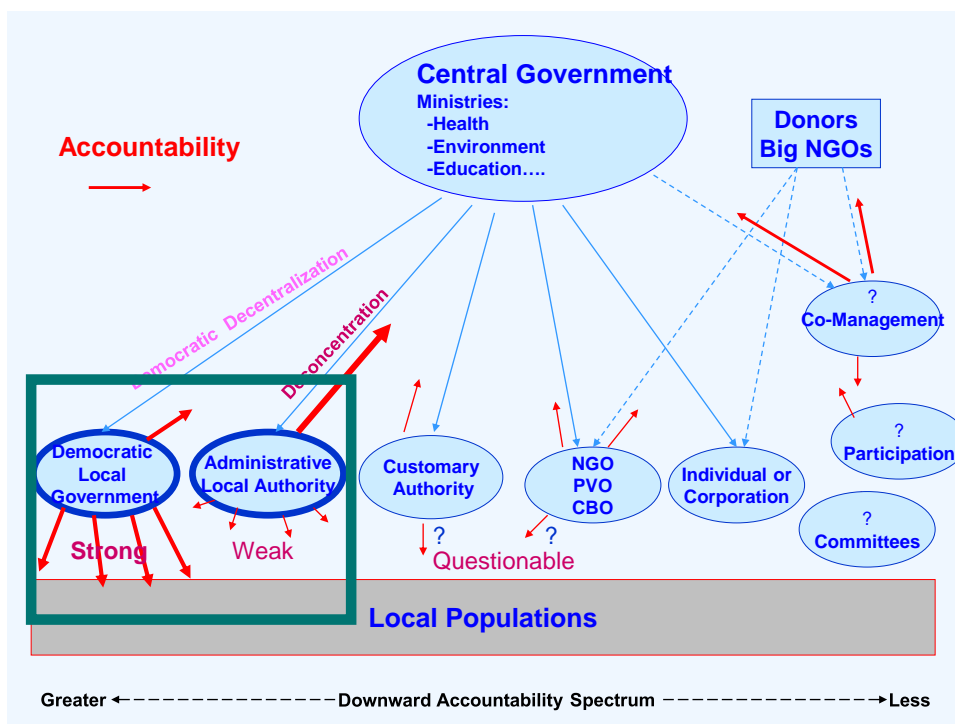
- ❖ **Program:** Decentralization and Environment  
Comparative Research Program
- ❖ **Analytic Framework:** Actors, Powers and  
Accountability Research Framework
- ❖ **Findings:** Decentralization in Practice
  - ⌚ What is happening in the name of decentralization?
  - ⌚ Why?
  - ⌚ Focus on Implementation rather than Outcomes
- ❖ **Recommendations:** Options and Opportunities

# Defining Decentralization



❖ A transfer of powers from central government to lower levels *IN* a political administrative territorial hierarchy.





## Why Decentralize?

### Theoretical Mechanisms of Decentralization Benefit

#### Advertised Benefits

- ❖ Enfranchisement, Equity, Efficiency, Development, Better Resource Management, Better service delivery, Benefit retention....

#### Mechanisms → Local Authorities are believed to:

- ❖ Better match services to needs and aspirations (public choice theory)
- ❖ Reduce transaction costs (new institutional eco.) by proximity allowing:
  - ↪ Mobilizing local knowledge and skills for collective/public good
  - ↪ Mobilizing local labor for collective projects
  - ↪ Improved coordination among local programs
- ❖ Balance of negative and positive outcomes in decision making (economic theory of "internalizing externalities")

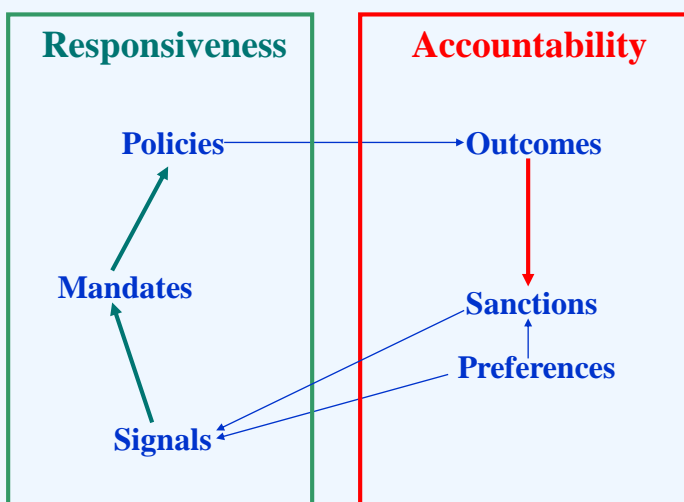
**→ ALL ARGUMENTS IMPLY INCLUSIVE & INTEGRATIVE MECHANISM: I.e. Representation**  
**= Downwardly Accountable INSTITUTIONS \*With\* POWERS**

# Representation Policy Model

- ❖ Representation = When authorities act in the best interest of the public [Pitkin; Manin, Przeworski and Stokes]
- ❖ Representation is the active ingredient making decentralized institutions effective [Smoke]

## REPRESENTATION

= Responsiveness &/or Accountability



## Elements of Representation

- ❖ **Responsiveness** =  $f(\text{Powers/Capabilities [internal powers]})$
- ❖ **Accountability** =  $f(\text{Sanctions or Accountability mechanisms})$

## Actors, Powers & Accountability Framework

- ❖ **Positive Outcomes are Expected from:**
  - ↪ Local **Actors** (individuals or Institutions)
  - ↪ With **Powers** (executive, legislative and judicial: discretion+capabilities to exercise them)
  - ↪ With **Accountability** to the Local Population

# **Implementation Findings: What Happens in Practice?**

**Choice of Institutions in Practice**

**Power Choices in Practice**

## **Government Tactics for Retaining Control**

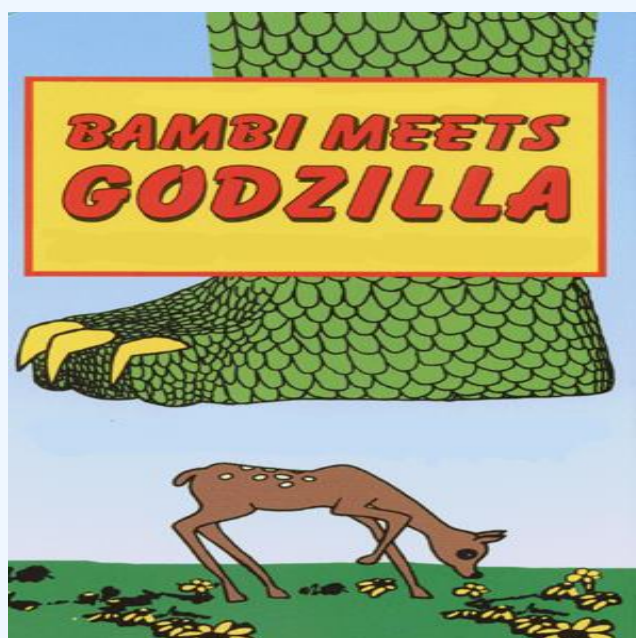
**→ Choice of Institutions**

**→ Resisting Power Transfers**

## Getting the Institutions Right?

- ❖ Decentralization theory is an IF-THEN proposition [out of new institutionalism]
  - ⌚ If we have the right institutions with the right powers
  - ⌚ Then we get all these positive outcomes
- ❖ But we're not getting to 'IF' in most cases
- **New institutionalism is being stomped out by a larger set of political-economic forces**  
[Sort of like "Bambi Meets Godzilla"]

### New Institutionalism Meets Political Economy



# CONCLUSIONS

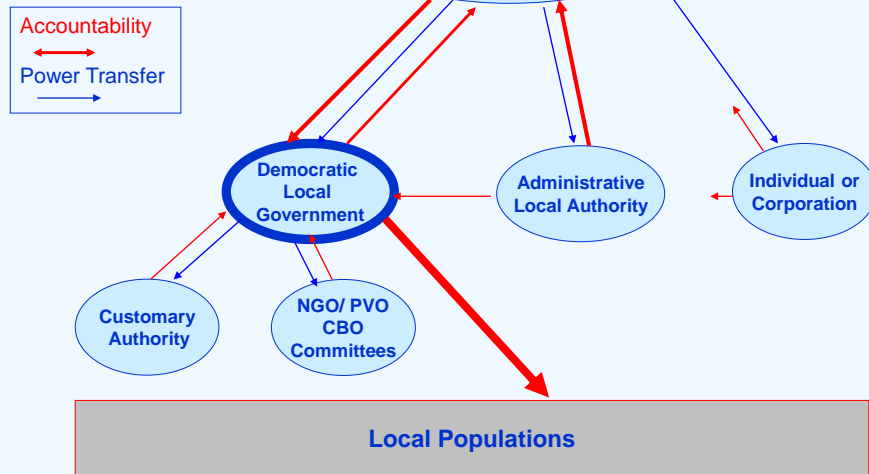
❖ What do we need to do?

**Subsidiarity Principles**

**Principles of Institutional  
Choice**



## Ideal Accountability of Institutions



# THE END\*

